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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST RISE OF THE Name Protestant;

And what *Protestantism* is: with a Justification of it; and an earnest Exhortation to all *Protestants* to persist in that *Holy Religion.*

By a Professed Enemy to Persecution.

LORD BISHOP of *CORK'S* Protestant Peace-Maker. *Pag.* 128. ——— *I am, and must be in the mind, that the Strength of the* Protestant *Cause, both here at Home, and throughout* Christendom, *lyes in the Union of* Protestants; *and the Glory, Purity, and Power of* Christianity *in the World, stands or falls with* PROTESTANTISM.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE Protestant Reader,

THE following Papers were, for the most part of them, writ two Years since, and had then been offered to your view, if they had not been obstructed by some Persons, and for some Considerations, of no use to be here mentioned.

The Author conceived at that time, there was occasion to suspect, that many who pretended to be Protestants, closed with that Profession out of Interest, or something a-kin to that, rather than from Knowledge and Conscience. Many appeared ignorant of the occasion of the Protestant Name, and to understand no better what was Protestantism it self. These seemed to be so wavering and uneasie under their present Circumstances, that little less was necessary to reconcile them to the Roman Religion, than to be certainly secured from the terrible effects of Humane Statutes, provided to deter Men from such Reconciliation.

This prompted the Author (having some undesired vacation at that time, from his usual Imploy) to endeavour to contribute something towards the helping of such, who were thus unsteady, to discern what it was they were about to relinquish; and consequently, enquire what it is, on the other side, they must espouse. People, in matters of Religion, ought to be considerate and wary; they should not deal

with Religion as they do with their Hats and Cloaths, when out of the fashion. He thinks that Gibbets and Confiscations, and such Engines, are no Gospel Appointments to befriend the True Faith. Yea, he is of opinion, that the Ambition and Sloth of Church-Officers, did first introduce Penal Laws, to defend and guard Christianity, and force People into a Profession of the Truth. And that Christianity made greater numbers of real Proselites, during Constantine's *general Toleration, than were made by the Penal Laws under that Emperour's Government, or by all the Penal Laws that ever were made since that time. He thinks that Penal Laws have not wholly rendred Christianity ineffectual; but how much they have impeded its progress, he thinks, is very hard to comprehend. They have certainly very much promoted Hypocrisy and Formality.*

The Author is indeed a Conformist, but one that was grieved at the indiscreet, and less charitable censures and carriages of many who boasted of the same character. He was really troubled to see them, who said they were Protestants, *behave themselves so unbecomingly towards their fellow* Protestants, *and so industriously weaken and undermine that very Church they made such a clamour about. He does not impute what they did, intirely to spleen and malice against the Church they pretended to. As for many of them, he apprehends their Intellectuals were so impotent, they had few thoughts of their own, by which to govern themselves, but were wholly under a forreign conduct, which yet they perceived not. How many more were influenced by motions too mean and carnal for any good Man voluntarily to resign himself unto? For the first sort, we may pray, as our Saviour did for his Crucifiers,* Lord, forgive them, for they knew not what they did. *But as for the other sort, he leaves others to consider what measure of Charity belongs to them, who furiously ruine their Religious Neighbours, and pull down the Church they seem to own, meerly to satisfie their own filthy and most detestable Lusts. He manifested some resentment, that* Protestantism *should be treated with so much harshness, by those who pretended to the same Religion. Which occasioned his having some experience, not only of the reproachful language, but the ruder effects of the misguided vehemence of some of his own Communion. But these things he overlooks, and hopes that others, whose treatment hath not been very obliging, will so forget what is past, as not to insist thereon, to the prejudice and dammage of the Religion in common amongst us.*

The Preface concurring in all these matters with the Author thinks,

thinks he may, with greater confidence, apply to all sorts of Protestants, in intreating and beseeching them, that they will not do any thing now against, but for the Truth. And more particularly, I would desire,

1. *Those who are indifferent and wavering, to consider, and think seriously before they change. Some, it may be, would make no scruple to depart from the* Protestant *Profession, were it not they were awed with the dread and terrour of some future danger in this World, that may possibly overtake them, should they, under present Circumstances, resign up themselves to a Profession our Laws have made Criminal. But true Religion is a matter quite distinct from Humane Laws; it is of most necessary and important concern to Men's Souls, and their Eternal Salvation. And Humane Laws, whether for, or against it, do not alter the Case. And therefore both as Christians and as Men, you ought to consider and weigh things. Where different Religions are propos'd, you must examine the Particulars on each side, by the Only Rule of Religion, and must govern your selves by Evidence. The nature and importance of Religion, and the unvaluable worth of your own Souls, require this. There is nothing so foolish and absurd, as to be of a Religion you do not understand, or to change your Profession, you know not why, nor wherefore. Would you alter, to obtain Preferments and Honours? Alas, how little reason have you to expect these things, whilst there are others of more desert, and who bring better Testimonials with them than you can? For he that changes inconsiderately, gives no proof, either of his Parts, or of his Integrity. Do you hope, by altering your Religion, to escape Troubles and Sufferings? This is an ill course to be taken for such a purpose, and not likely to succeed, because God can find you out, and has ways enough to punish you. Besides, you are assured you shall not be forced to relinquish the Profession or Exercise of your Religion, by a Royal Promise. A Promise, which fully performed, will attract greater repute and glory to the* Roman *Religion, than all the Arguments and Devices, the most learned and subtil Adherers to that See, did ever invent. So that you have nothing, under which you may shelter your Apostacy, nothing to patronize your Revolt. And to Apostatise without a Temptation, is at once both a Folly and Wickedness, that nothing can match on either account.*

2. *Those, who pretending to the* Church of England, *have by an extravigant fervency, and unneighbourly earnestness, done all*

that

that was in their power to impoverish, maimerate, and render their fellow Protestants *uneasie and comfortless? These I would intreat to think with sedateness on what they have done, how much they have injured the* Protestant *Interest, and what a stroke they have laid the Communion to which they pretended, open unto? 'Tis high time you to betake your selves to a deep Humiliation, godly Sorrow, and sound Repentance for what you have done; yea, to take care you manifest your Humiliation and Repentance in so solemn and publick a manner, as may bear some proportion to the Notoriety of your fault. What inexcusable wrong have you done to the* Protestant *Cause? What a dreadful blow have you given the* Church of England? *Have you not made it shut to totter? Have you not laid it almost irrecoverably prostrate? What wounds like those which were made by pretended Friends? Go not about to contrive excuses, to palliate the mischief you have done, no verbal Apology can make amends for your Crime. Repent and weep, and pray and reform, and this speedily, thorowly aggrevate your guilt, take shame to your selves publickly, and by hearty Repentance, and thorow Reformation, hasten to put a stop to those Inundations of Judgments you have made way for; this is the least you ought to do. Remember that* Heathens *and* Jews, *in prosecuting the Old* Christians; *and the* Romanists *in persecuting* Protestants, *have this excuse above you, that they never persecuted for things which they themselves acknowledged to be meerly indifferent. As you have not been afraid to commit these evil things against your Fellow* Protestants, *with a high hand, and in the sight of the Sun; so be not now ashamed to make your Repentance as open and visible: neither be averse, by restitution to the utmost of your power, to make satisfaction for all your unjust and mercileſs exactions. What have you wrung and squeez'd from others in an violent arbitrary way? How many have you impoverish't, and reduc't to utmost extremities, and this for things, which at the same time you could not but acknowledge, were not worth one hair of any Man's Head? Suffer not the Wages of unrighteousness to remain in any of your Hands, or in any of your Houses; but by faithful restitution, do the best you can to secure your selves from the dreadful Recompences such Wickednesses do expose you unto. If you make not the best satisfaction you are able, to those you have wronged, what can you expect, but that God will remember your doings against you, and that you shall perish for ever like your*

thus done? He hath ſwallowed down Riches, and he ſhall vomit them up again, God ſhall caſt them out of his Belly. *Job.* 20. 15. *Have you not juſt reaſon to be afraid, leſt Divine Vengeance ſhould overtake you on the ſudden; and that God ſhould make the Land ſpew out ſuch Inhabitants?* Wherefore let my Counſel be acceptable unto you, and break off your Sins by Righteouſneſs, and your Iniquities, by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor, if it may be a lengthening of your Tranquility, *Dan.* 4. 27.

3. *Thoſe who diſſent from the* Church of England: *Theſe I would deſire to take care, they do not reſent their former unkind Treatment with any exorbitances, nor ſuffer the remembrance thereof to alienate them from their* Proteſtant *Brethren of the other Communion. Do not indulge to your Paſſions, nor keep at any greater diſtance than needs you muſt. Be not hurried into any unadviſed compliances, on the one Hand; or ſtifneſs on the other. Permit not wrath or revenge to have any place in you, much leſs, to tranſport you into any unchriſtian indecencies. Fall not your ſelves into what you have perceived to have no comlineſs in the* Conformiſt *Party. Fall not out one with another: improve the Eaſe, Freedom, and Liberty you injoy, for the real Intereſt of Religion. Be not concerned to make Parties; neither be overwarm for Notions or Practices which have no plain and expreſs warrant in Scripture.*

Let us all unite, and be brotherly affectioned one towards another. Let us lay aſide and caſt from us, with utmoſt diſlike, all our Animoſities, carnal Intereſts, and unjuſt Prejudices on every hand. Let us wholly mind the things of Chriſt, and bear on anothers burthens; leave all Indifferencies juſt as Chriſt hath left them; make the Scriptures our only Rule, and lay no more ſtreſs on any particulars, than Chriſt himſelf hath laid on them. Let us all pray earneſtly, improve diligently, both the Inſtructions of the Holy Scriptures, and the preſent Calls of Providence. Let us all humble our ſelves duly under the Mighty Hand of God; ſearch into, and try our Hearts and our Ways, and turn to the Lord from all our evil doings, with our whole might. Let us all be of one mind, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel; and let us follow after Peace with

all Men, and Holiness; without which none must see the Lord. Then will the Lord return, and be gracious; And the Ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to *Zion* with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads. They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. *Isai.* 35. 10.

A N

AN ACCOUNT

Of the FIRST RISE of the Name

Proteſtant, &c.

Maimburgh (in his Hiſtory of the *League*) having occaſion to take notice of a Story, which had been publiſhed, and had paſſed very currently a long time without contradiction, for which he could find no warrant; after he had made a full inquiry about it, makes this Remark: "This in reaſon ſhould give a "caution to ſuch as undertake the writing of a Hiſtory, not to "truſt all ſorts of Writers, and not ambitiouſly to ſwell their "Works with all they find written in certain unauthentick Me-"moirs, without giving themſelves the leiſure to examine their "merit and their quality. *Pag.* 169.

Had this Author himſelf exactly remembred, and ſtrictly kept to this hint in all his Writings, he would have done much to have rais'd himſelf a laſting honourable Reputation, he would have greatly befriended and obliged the preſent Generation and Poſterity, none could have had good warrant to write againſt him, his Hiſtories would have been more conſiderable for their Truth, than now they be for their Stile.

And if others, who pretend to miſlike *miſrepreſenting*, had but carefully obſerved this Rule of *Maimburgh*'s, with others of the like import, *Chriſtians*, the moſt innocent, and of greateſt worth, could not have been ſo injuriouſly aſperſt and beſpattered, as of late they have been by ſeveral hands.

Whatever complaints and outcries may be rais'd againſt the *Proteſtants*, as if they were not candid and juſt enough in the Accounts they give the World of the *Romaniſt*'s Faith, Wor-

 ſhip,

ſhip, and Practice; though we ſhould allow, that in ſome particulars, particular Writers have exceeded, and not kept within ſuch moderate bounds as they would have done, had they followed the examples of our moſt Learned and Judicious Authors; who beyond contradiction, have proved more againſt their Adverſaries than we do ordinarily expreſly charge them with; yet upon ſuppoſition that ſome of our Writers have been faulty this way, they are not the only Perſons guilty; and of all people in the world, the *Romaniſts* have the leaſt reaſon to inſiſt on a charge of this nature; for though their fault doth not excuſe any of our Writers, if guilty in the ſame manner, yet it renders them very unmeet to upbraid and reproach, and make tragical complaints againſt others, for what they are more enormiouſly faulty in themſelves.

It is but too obvious, that ſome pains have been taken of late, to miſrepreſent the *Proteſtants* all over, and to perſwade the world into a belief of very odd and ſtrange things both concerning their Perſons and Religion, yea, the very *Name* by which they are every where known.

Indeed the word *Proteſtant*, and its Riſe, have been ſo decyphered and repreſented under ſuch ungrateful Characters, by perſons of one complexion and of another, that ſome (who, it might have been expected, had had more knowledge, and more wit) have been almoſt, or rather, quite aſhamed of that *Name* which their Anceſtors accounted an honour, and by which the Religion they pretend to, is every where known: what thoughts ſuch have of the Religion it ſelf, time may diſcover. Who would ever have thought that *Engliſhmen*, who had a long time, or rather, all their time been brought up in the *Church of England*, and would fain have made a Figure in their Countries, ſhould yet be at a loſs by what name to call the Religion they did profeſs; certainly the common name might have paſt well enough, had not ſome unjuſt prejudice prevail'd: And it's very probable, this prejudice did take its Riſe from one or others miſrepreſenting, and giving a wrong account of that Name.

Thoſe who profeſs true and unmixt *Chriſtianity*, have for a great while, been diſtinguiſhed in moſt parts of the World, by the name of *Proteſtants*; from others, who have mingled with a profeſſion of *Chriſtianity* a great many groſs contradictions and inconſiſtencies: And till now of late, none who owned the

the Religion, were ashamed of the *Name*: Those who liked not the *Romish Communion*, did not think it a reproach to be called *Protestants*. Though the *Name* might be first devised by the Adversaries of our Religion, and might be used by them at first in scorn and contempt, with reference to those who would not imbrace and submit to all the forreign and unscriptural Notions and Practices which received life and authority from *Rome*; yet the antient love to, and zeal for Religion, only as commanded by divine Authority, and as warranted by those Books which are universally acknowledged by all *Christians* to be writ by men divinely inspired, reconciled our Ancestors to that *Name* by which the Adversaries of their Religion would have rediculd them out of their Profession. And how it is come to pass, that people professing the same Religion, should now appear shy, and boggle at the *Name*, as if some dreadful and hideous matter were wrapt up in the word *Protestant*, I cannot imagine, unless either their love to, and zeal for their Religion, be less than their Ancestor's was; or that some false representations have been made to them of the importance and first occasion of this *Name*. What sort of writers have contributed most to create prejudices in mens minds against the name *Protestant*, I will not determine: but I do not lay all the fault of misrepresenting in this case, on those who do openly profess themselves of the *Romish Communion*; and yet I cannot wholly excuse them, because of late, they have been at no small study and trouble to perswade people to entertain very wrong Idea's both of the *Protestant* Name and Religion.

We are lately told, that "The *Protestant Perswasion* has its "Name, Being, and Support, not from what it is in it self, but "from what it is not, in defying and protesting against their "Neighbours. *Rep. in behalf of Amicable Accomod.* pag. 17.

Now it may not be altogether improper, in order to the setting of some weaker people right in their apprehensions, to give a short and true account of the first occasion and rise of this Name *Protestant*, and its general use ever since, from Authors of the best credit and repute on each side.

And that this Account may be the more clear and distinct, it will be requisite to observe in general, That a great corruption had for many Ages overspread *Christianity*, in the *Romish* Church. Afterwards we may take notice, how Princes and People were more directly prepared to renounce and cast off

those Corruptions:; and then it will be proper to relate the particular matter of Fact which occasioned this Name *Protestant*: and when these are dispatched, you shall hear what *Protestantism* is, and wherein *Protestantism* doth really consist.

The word *Protestant* is a forreign word, derived to us from other people; and it has been, and is still used with relation to Religion, in all Nations where it is mentioned. So that every where, those who have owned and professed the *Protestant* Religion, have past currently with all sorts of people for *Protestants*. And the *Protestant* Religion is the true *Christian* Religion, rescued and reformed from those Corruptions and humane Additions the *Church of Rome* had for many Ages, without good warrant, intermixed with it.

The Mystery of Iniquity, which began in the Apostles days, did by degrees increase to that height in the *Roman* Church, that it almost overwhelmed true *Christianity*, and made Religion appear, and be in the world little else than a trick of policy, and a meer piece of Pageantry. And when the people had been a great while inured to nothing but lifeless Superstitious Formalities, and were brought up blindly in a superstitious, carnal, gay sort of practice, which was called Worship, the Bishops of that *See* did by several artifices and tricks, first acquire, and then improve opportunities, to gratifie their own utmost and unreasonable ambition: for the Princes and People were in many places so effeminated, made so soft and easie, and unthinking by their methods, they very tamely and patiently gave way to their most unjust incroachments, till at last they were not able to help themselves, nor oppose the increasing greatness of that *See*. And when matters were brought to this pass, then several points were forced on the whole *Western* Church; the burthen of which, the Inhabitants of those parts had never before felt; and which those who first gave way to the Usurpations of that *See*, never dream't of. Now an universal Supremacy over the whole Church was challenged, and a power pretended, to make whatever pleas'd a Duty. In short, the Bishop of that *See* pretended an Infallibility, which must not be call'd in question; he assum'd a power to dispose of People's Sins and Souls as he thought fit, and perswaded them he could consecrate any thing they would buy, to be an effectual means to purge away their guilt. Nay, at last he claimed a power to dispose of Governments, appropriating to himself a

Supe-

Superiority in every Prince's Dominions; and both Princes and People were blinded to that degree, through the Ignorance, Superſtitions, and Impurity which they had given way to, and the juſt infatuation which God ſuffered to crawl on and overpower them, that for a long time, very few, either of the Princes or People, did make any conſiderable attempts to extricate themſelves out of that Bondage, or get rid of the Tyranny and Apoſtacy into which they were ſunk.

But the time haſtening on, when God would deliver his People out of of that wretched eſtate: The Head and principal Inſtruments of the *Romiſh* State were grown ſo ſecure and fearleſs of danger, they gave up themſelves to their Luſts, and minded nothing but how to invent new ways to impoveriſh the people; by which means they occaſioned the people to awake, and ſuggeſted to their minds the moſt powerful and juſteſt prejudices againſt the way they were in, and that Church they did then adhere to.

For though there were many beams of light which ſhone up and down in the world, yet two things did principally diſpoſe the people to caſt off that Spiritual and Civil Yoke which had mightily gall'd both their Conſciences and their Necks, and to inquire after the Truth and Purity of Religion.

The firſt, was the obvious, prodigious Ignorance, Sloth, and beaſtly Senſuality and Debauchery of the generality of thoſe who pretended they had the keeping of the people's Souls and Conſciences; the Wickedneſs, Tyranny, and Unſatiableneſs of the greateſt part, by far, of the Clergy, was ſuch as ſtruck moſt violently on the outward ſenſes of the People: So that they were forced to conclude, God would not intruſt any extraordinary *Depoſitum* with ſuch perſons. A *German* Biſhop, in the year 1519 (which was not long before the *Reformation*,) complains (as in *Muſeccle* I find him quoted) in this manner: "I am afraid the Doctrine of the Apoſtle, touching the Qua-"lifications of a Biſhop, is but very ill obſerved in theſe days, "or rather, that we are fallen into thoſe Times which he noted, "when he ſaid, *I know that after my Departure Ravenous Wolves* "*will come among you, not ſparing the Flock.* Where may one "ſee a good Man choſen to be a Biſhop? One approved by "his Works and his Learning: And any one, who is not either "a Child, or Worldly, or ignorant in Spiritual things? They "have no love for ony but Sinners, they deſpiſe the Poor,

"they

"they keep about their persons Pimps, Debauchers of Wo-
"men, Flatterers, Buffoons, Players, when they should have
"wise and holy Men. The Revenues of the Church are given,
"not to the Servants of God, but to those of the Devil, to
"Debauchers of Women, to Adulterers, Gamesters, Hunters,
"Flatterers, and such like Men. And hence it is, that the
"House of God is become Tributary to the Devil. *Matthew Paris*, I remember, speaking in his History, of the corruption and wickedness of the Clergy, saith, "It was risen to so infa-
"mous a height, the Devil sent them Letters of Thanks,
"because of the extraordinary service they did him, in sending
"Souls to Hell in greater Troops than ever came thither before. You may find large accounts of, and complaints against their notorious wickedness in the Writings of *Nic. de Clemang.* and others. Several of the *Popish* Writers do acknowledge, their Debauchery and Wickedness was such, as did necessitate the people to seek after a Reformation. "And truly (saith *Me-*
"*cerey*) the extream Ignorance of the Clergy, many of them
"scarce able to read; the scandalous Lives of the Pastors, most
"of them Concubinaries, Drunkards, and Usurers; and their
"extream negligence gave him (viz. *Luther*) a fair advan-
"tage to perswade the people, that the Religion they taught,
"was corrupt, since their Lives and Examples were so
"bad.

A second thing which very much awaken'd the Princes and People, and prepar'd them to cast off and renounce the *Romish* Trumpery, was the Pope's, Bishop's, and other Ecclesiastical Officers most enormious prostituting those very things wherein they pretended to place very much of their Religion, and by which they pretended to impart to the people the Merits of Jesus Christ, and of the Saints. For *Leo* the Tenth having a mind to raise great Summs of Mony to satisfie his own profuse humour, and make large Provisions for his Kindred, sent abroad his Agents through the Empire, but especially in *Germany*, to sell the pardon of Sins publickly, under pretence to build the Church of St. *Peters* at *Rome*. The Sellers of these Indulgencies, did prostitute them at the strangest rate imaginable; for they would sell them for any thing wherewith they might satisfie their Lusts. They would play them away at Taverns; at a Game at Dice, they would stake a Man against so much Money, the Par-

Per lustra 15 popinas quotidie sine pudore

don

don of his sins, or a power to deliver Souls out of *Purgatory*.

And when this was complained of, and wrote against by *Luther*, the *Pope* sent his *Bull* to confirm these *Indulgencies*, asserting his power to give and divulge them in this manner. By the power of the Keys given to St. *Peter* and his Successors, the Bishops of *Rome*, had a right to pardon the Faithful all the guilt and punishment of their Actual Sins; to wit, the guilt, by means of the Sacrament of *Pennance*, and the temporal Punishment by means of Indulgencies, whether in this life, or in *Purgatory*: and that by those Indulgencies, he could apply to the Living and the Dead, the superabundance of the Merits of Jesus Christ and the Saints, either by way of Absolution, or by way of Suffrage. So that the Living and the Dead participating of those Indulgencies, were delivered from the punishment that the Divine Justice would inflict on them for their Actual Sins.

in aleæ lusum, usuſque turpissimos potestatem ex tractandi animas sanctorum ex igne expiatorio profundebant. In Aug. Thuam. *Hist.* l. 13. *vide* Mezeurah. *Ann.* 1517.

But *Luther*'s contending this point with the *Romish* Agents, put him and others on a more strict Inquiry into other Corruptions in that Church: by which means Light broke forth dayly with more power, to the full satisfaction of very many, that there was an absolute necessity of a Reformation. And the Agents being not able to contest the matter fairly with *Luther*, *Eccius* and others being quite worsted and baffled in their arguings, *Sylvester Prierias* positively insisted on the *Pope*'s authority, acknowledging the Scriptures did not warrant those Indulgencies, but that the *Pope* did, whose authority, he asserted, was above the Scriptures. And thus he brought that point on the stage, which upon examination, appearing to be a meer cheat and gross untruth, the people hastened to imbrace the Sufficiency of the Scripture, and that the Holy Scriptures were the only Rule God had appointed *Christians* to guide themselves by in all matters of Religion, in opposition to the *Pope*'s pretended authority.

Sleid. Com. lib. 1. An. 1519. *Quicunque non innititur doctrinæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ, aut Romani Pontificis, tam quam regulæ fidei infallibili, aquâ etiam sacra Scriptura robur trahit & authoritatem, is Hæreticus.*

This, of the *Pope*'s authority, being the point, for which both Head and Members of that Church were mainly concerned, and which supports and keeps all the other corruptions in that

Church,

Church, in life, when the vanity and ungroundedneſs, the abſurdity and wickedneſs of that claim came to be expoſed and laid open to the World, the Intereſt of that Church did very much ſink, and the authority of Scripture was much advanced amongſt people. So that the *Pope*, notwithſtanding all his Letters and Stratagems to deſtroy *Luther*, and hinder the ſpreading of that Light which was now broken forth, could not effect his deſign; but knowledge increaſed every day, and the authority of the Scripture was much inſiſted on, to the great damage of the *Pope* and his Adherents.

'Tis true, the *Pope* by his Letters and Nuncio's, did prevail with the Emperour, and ſome of the Princes of *Germany*, to make an Edict, when they were aſſembled at *Worms*, which forbad *Luther* Fire and Water, and the commerce of all the World; it extended alſo to all his Favourers and Followers, and Complices: but the more violent the *Pope* and and his people were againſt *Luther*, and the greater ſtir they kept with the Princes to ſee the Edict of *Worms* ſtrictly executed, the greater number of Friends God raiſed up for *Luther* and his Followers.

Mounſ. Claudiſ *of the Reformation*, part 3d.

For the Princes aſſembled at *Nuremberg*, declared they could not put the *Pope*'s Bull, nor the Edict of *Worms* in execution, without involving themſelves in great dangers, and that the generality of the people were ſo ſenſible how matters ſtood, having their eyes opened by the writiugs of the *Lutherans*, that if they ſhould execute thoſe Sentences, the people would believe they were only made to overthrow the Truth of the Goſpel, and to maintain and defend their evil abuſes and impieties, *&c.* And having drawn up this their Anſwer in form of an Edict, they ſent their grievances to the *Pope*, to the number of an hundred Articles, which they call'd, *Centum Gravamina.*

After this, another Aſſembly of the Princes publiſh'd another declaration in form of an Imperial Edict, which extreamly provok't the *Pope* and all his Creatures. Upon this the *Pope* complained to the Emperour by Letters; and to animate him the more, he perſwaded him that that was a manifeſt breach of his Authority, and a form and deſign to withdraw themſelves intirely from his Obedience: the Emperour is hereby prevailed with to concern himſelf in the matter; and accordingly, writes very preremptorily to the Princes, requiring them to execute the Edict

of

of *Worms*, and make void that of *Nuremberg*. And this brings me to the very Rise of the Name *Protestant*; an Account of which I will give you in the *englished* words of a Forreign Divine, who hath very faithfully collected his Relation out of the most celebrated and authentick Historians who have writ the Affairs of those Times. His Account is thus.

"In the Month of *April*, in the Year 1529, an Assembly "of the Princes and other States of *Germany* was held at *Spire*; "whether Pope *Clement* did not fail to send "a Nuncio: the first thing they did there, "was to reject the Assembly at the City of "*Strasburgh*, under pretence that it had "abolished the use of the *Mass*, without "waiting for the Imperial Diet. This violent procedure was "quickly after followed by a Decree, that *Ferdinand* Arch-"Duke of *Austria*, and some other Princes who took part with "the Court of *Rome* made, and whom the Emperour had expresly "chozen for his Deputy Commissioners. They ordained there-"fore in the first place, that those who till then had observed "the Edict of *Worms*, that is to say, who not only had not re-"ceived the Reformation, but who had persecuted it with all "their might, should for the future do the like, and force their "Subjects to do the same: And that as for those, in whose "Countries those new Doctrines had been spread abroad, pro-"vided they could not extirpate them, without putting them-"selves into manifest danger of stirring up Troubles, it should "be their part, at least, to hinder any thing more from being "Innovated, till the calling of a Council. *Secondly*, They "ordained, that above all things, the Doctrine which oppo-"sed the *Substantial Presence*, should neither be propounded "nor received by any in all the compass of *Germany*, and that "the *Mass* should not be abrogated. In the *Third* place, they "decreed, that they should not allow Preachers in any place "to explain the Gospel otherwise than by the Interpretation "of the *Fathers*. In fine, they ordained grievous penalties "against the *Printers* and *Booksellers* who should print or "vend, for the future, the Books that contained that new "Doctrine.

M. Clauddef. *of the Reform.* part 3*d.* pag. 51. &c.

"The other Princes and States of the Empire beholding this "manifest Oppression, thought themselves bound to make an "Act of *Protestation* to the contrary: They Remonstrated

" therefore, that that new Decree contradicted that which had " been paſſed in the preceding Aſſembly, where every one was " to be free in reſpect of his Religion; that they did not pre- " tend to hinder the other Princes and States from enjoying that " Liberty; but that on the contrary, they pray'd God that He " would give them the knowledge of His Truth: That they " could not, with a good Conſcience, approve of the Reaſon, " for which they would allow them to retain the Evangelical " Doctrine, to wit, leaſt they ſhould fall into new Troubles; " for that would be to confeſs, that it would be good to re- " nounce that Doctrine, if it could be done without Tumult; " which would be a criminal and wicked Confeſſion, and a tacit " Denyal of the Word of God. That as to the *Maſs*, thoſe " who had aboliſh't it, and who had re-eſtabliſhed in its place " the lawful uſe of the *Supper* of our Lord, were led by the In- " ſtitution of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That as for the Doctrine " that oppoſed the *Real Preſence*, they did not believe, that " they ought lightly to condemn thoſe who held it, without " hearing them; and that proceeding was againſt Equity, eſpe- " cially in a matter of ſo great conſequence. In fine, that they " could not conſent to that Decree, offering the Reaſons of " their carriage to the Emperour and all the World. That " they did appeal to a Free Council, and that in waiting for " it, they would do nothing for which they ſhould juſtly de- " ſerve any blame. —— This *Act of Proteſtation* was made " at *Spire*, the 19*th*. of *April*, 1529. And " from thence came the Name of *Proteſtants*; " which has been ſince given to all thoſe " who have embraced the *Reformation*.

Unde Proteſtantium nomen quod ad omnes poſtea, qui eorum quæ perperam in religionem invecta ſunt, emendationem amplecti ſe profeſſi ſunt, obitque ab Eccleſia Romana deſecere, dimanavit. Thuan. *Hiſt.* lib. 1. p. 26.

Nomen per contemptum ab adverſariis ob proteſtationem Spiræ *impoſitum.* D. Prideaux Lect. 9. *de* viſibil. Eccleſ.

This is the true Account of the firſt Riſe of this Name *Proteſtant*; which was uſed by way of reproach by thoſe who adhered to the *Romiſh* Corruptions, and aſſerted the *Pope's* Authority above the Scripture, towards them who renounced thoſe Corruptions, and proteſted againſt the *Pope's* Supremacy, and for the Sufficiency and ſole Authority of the Scripture.

And this Name hath ever ſince been applied to, and appropriated by them who have renounced Popiſh Corruptions, and eſpecially, that great Fun-

Fundamental Article of the Supremacy, becauſe of their contradiction to, and derogating from the Holy Scriptures.

The beſt Hiſtorians, both *Proteſtant* and *Popiſh*, do confirm the Truth of this Relation; and that all people have promiſcuouſly paſt in all Countries under the Name of *Proteſtants*, who have renounced the *Pope*'s Authority, and that Body or Syſtem of falſe Doctrines and ſuperſtitious Practices, which are maintained and juſtified in the *Romiſh Church*, becauſe of their contradiction unto Scripture.

For the Name *Proteſtant* is a common Title to diſcriminate all thoſe who renounce and forſake the *Romiſh* Communion, becauſe of its contradiction to the Holy Scripture, from thoſe who do own, and are of that Communion. But it was not deſigned to deſcriminate one ſort of people renouncing and proteſting againſt that Communion on the aforeſaid Account, from others who agree in the ſame Point. And therefore in every Age and Nation, other Names have been made uſe of to diſcriminate *Proteſtants* one from another, according to the matter in difference betwixt them.

True *Proteſtantiſm* then conſiſteth more eſpecially in two Points.

Firſt, Proteſting againſt, and renouncing *Popiſh* Corruptions, and eſpecially all ſuch Infallibility, Supremacy, and Authority as the Biſhops of *Rome* have, for ſome Ages, laid a claim to. It is the renouncing the thing it ſelf, which *Proteſtantiſm* chiefly reſpects; its reference to ſuch a particular perſon, is only accidental, by reaſon of his audacious and arrogant challenging that Power. But *Proteſtantiſm* would be equally againſt the Claim, if that Biſhop ſhould lay it down, and any other, either in *France*, or in any other Countrey, ſhould challenge it; or if it ſhould be pretended to be lodged in any other Man, or Body of Men.

Secondly, Proteſting for the Sufficiency and Authority of the Scripture: That the Holy Scripture is a ſafe and full Rule for the Inſtruction of us in all things needful to be known or done in order to Eternal Life; and that nothing ought to be admitted as an Article of Chriſtian Faith; which cannot, by juſt conſequence, be proved by this Rule, according as the *Church of England* expreſſeth her ſelf. *Article 6.*

In theſe two things *Proteſtantiſm* doth conſiſt; the denial and renouncing of the *Pope's* arrogated Supremacy, and all

those Superstructions which have no foundation but that Authority; and the owning and adhering to the Scriptures, as the only compleat Rule of Religion: This is the great, fundamental, positive Principle in *Protestantism*. For *Protestantism* doth not take away an undue, boundless Power and Authority from the *Pope*, and confer it on another person. It ascribes indeed to the Supream Power in every Nation, what belongs to the same, according to the constitution of the Government; protesting against all forreign and every unjust pretence and claim, to the prejudice of the rightful Owner. And it asserts the only right of the Scripture to be the Rule that every Supream Power on Earth should observe in restoring and reforming Religion, as occasions are offered, by reason of the Decays or Corruptions which may have prevailed.

Chillingworth's *Safe way to Salvation*, pag. 375.

"The Bible, I say, the Bible only is the "Religion of *Protestants*, whatsoever else "they Believe besides it, and the plain ir-"refragable, indubitable Consequences of "it; well may they hold it as a matter of "Opinion; but as matter of Faith and Religion, neither can "they, with coherence to their own grounds, Believe it them-"selves, nor require the Belief of it of others, without most high "and Schismatical Presumption.

And now, seeing *Protestantism* doth mainly, or rather, only consist in asserting the Holy Scriptures to be the Rule, the only Rule, by which all Christians are to govern and manage themselves in all matters of Religion. So that no Doctrine is to be owned as an Article of Faith, on any account, but what hath very plain warant and sound evidence from the Scriptures; nor no instance of Religious Worship to be owned or submitted to, as necessary; nor any thing to be entertained as a part of Religion, but what the Scripture doth appoint and warrant. It may not be altogether unuseful, to inquire briefly, whether this Principle be really justifiable, or no? Or, whether those who are called *Protestants*, on this Account, be truly in the right, touching this matter? For, if we be right in this Point, then the great Fundamental opposite Point of our Adversaries must needs have a flaw in it, and cannot be solid and substantial; and consequently, all the particular Doctrines and Practices, which have their whole being and Dependance on that Authority, must necessarily expire, and give np the Ghost.

Now

Now much might be offered to evince, that *Proteſtants* have very good ground to reſt aſſured, that they are not miſtaken in this matter: but I will only offer theſe few conſiderations; which being well conſidered and improved, may ſuffice to ſatiſfie any unprejudiced and impartial honeſt meaning perſon, that *Proteſtantiſm* is not a humerſome precarious thing, but is really accompanied with the greateſt evidence and certainty any Perſwaſion can juſtly pretend unto.

Firſt, It is univerſally acknowledged, by all who profeſs themſelves *Chriſtians*, that the Holy Scriptures, *viz.* thoſe Books contained in the Old and New Teſtament, as received by *Proteſtants*, are the Word of God, and were written at the appointment of God, for the conſtant Uſe and Benefit of his Church and People, by Perſons Divinely Inſpired for that purpoſe.

Secondly, Suppoſing (but not granting) that thoſe Scriptures do not contain the whole Revelation God hath made of his Mind and Will, for the conſtant, perpetual, and obliging Uſe of his Church; yet it is moſt evident, that theſe Scriptures are a ſafe and moſt certain Rule in Matters of Religion, ſo far as they do extend. They are a certain Rule touching thoſe matters of which they do treat, and ſo far as they do treat of them.

So that there can be no juſt pretence of a Divine Revelation for any Doctrines or Practices which are inconſiſtent with, or contradictory to what God hath declared in theſe Scriptures: Becauſe the Divine Veracity and Truth, which is Eſſential to the Deity, cannot permit, that God ſhould contradict himſelf. All that can be pretended, with reference to this matter, is, that God may make more Declarations of his Will; and either inlarge the Diſcoveries He hath made of his Will touching particulars already made known; or add Declarations of His Mind concerning Matters which He doth not at all diſcourſe of in the Scriptures. But it is not conſiſtent with the Natural Notions of a Deity, nor with the Revelations God hath made any way of Himſelf, that He ſhould overthrow the Truth of a Former Revelation by a Latter, or that Contradictions ſhould be reconcileable in His Will.

For

For any Man to affirm that a Divine Revelation may contradict any thing taught in the Scriptures, whil'ſt he profeſſeth theſe Scriptures are pure Divine Revelations, is not only to involve himſelf in moſt obvious and horrid Abſurdities, but to contract upon himſelf, to burthen and overwhelm himſelf with the guilt of the moſt plain and unnatural Blaſphemy againſt God. If any thing that plainly contradicts the Scripture, can be a Divine Revelation, then a Man may be indiſpenſibly obliged to Believe, and not to Believe the ſame thing; to do, and not to do the ſame work. And ſo Man will be brought under ſuch Circumſtances, that whether he Believe, or do not Believe; whether he Practice, or do not Practice, it will be the ſame thing, he will be equally guilty. But certainly, if our Adverſaries can pretend to Revelations which do contradict the Scriptures, they cannot pretend to lay any Obligation on us to comply with them in thoſe Matters which the Scriptures do contradict; for we have every jot as good Authority to Believe and Practice in direct contradiction to them, as they have to Believe and Act in expreſs contradiction to us, though we ſhould condeſcend to an impoſſible Suppoſition, *viz.* That a Divine Revelation may contradict the Scriptures. Beſides, they have no need or occaſion to trouble themſelves to prevail with us to comply with them in their Points; for (ſuppoſing their Revelations to be as they prerend) whether we comply, or do not comply, the Caſe is juſt the ſame; for we are never the better if we do comply with them; nor is our guilt and offence one jot the more, if we do not comply. But if what they call Divine Revelations, be not really ſo; and they will, notwithſtanding, Believe or Act, or both, in contradiction to the Scriptures, which are known, owned, and profeſſed Divine Revelations; let them ſeriouſly conſider what is like to be the fruit of their ſo doing. We have reaſon therefore to conclude, that all thoſe Doctrines and Practices which are inconſiſtent with, and do contradict what is declared in the Holy Scripture, have not a Divine Original, but have their Riſe from the fountain of Falſhood and Untruth: And therefore we cannot be juſtly blamed, if we proteſt againſt and reject ſuch Notions and Practices; for we certainly have a good Foundation and juſt Authority for every part of our Religion, which Scripture doth expreſly and plainly warrant. And they muſt needs be at a great loſs for juſt Authority, as to thoſe Points which expreſly contradict the

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Scripture, whatever may become of those Points amongst them, touching which, they may conceive the Scripture is silent.

But lastly, If the Holy Scriptures we are speaking of, do contain the whole and intire Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, which he hath designed for the constant and perpetual use of his Church and People, and do furnish People with full Instructions and Directions in all Matters of Religion, then *Protestants* have very good warrant to affirm and stedfastly adhere to this Point, *viz.* That the Holy Scriptures are the only Rule we are to govern our selves by in all Matters of Religion. And we are safe enough as to this part of our main Principle; and cannot, with any justice, be reproached or blamed by our Adversaries on this Account, till they can produce very good and substantial evidence for some other Divine Revelation really distinct from those we are discoursing of. But this is a task so hard for them to undertake, so impossible for them to perform, that there is not one understanding person in that Communion (I am perswaded) who dares adventure to ingage in it. For it will not serve the turn to talk honourably of Tradition in general, nor to make a noise about Apostolical Traditions, without mentioning particular Traditions, and proving them to be Divine Revelations, and that they are truly Apostolical, and were by Divine Appointment set apart for the perpetual use of the Christian Church. The Council of *Trent* speaks loud of Apostolical Traditions, and advances them to the same degree with the Holy Scriptures, and appears so resolv'd for these Traditions, that she makes them necessary to compleat the Scripture, in order unto its being a perfect Rule: but alas, her courage cool'd in a little time, for she dared only to talk extravagantly, and in excessive terms of Tradition in General; she dared not to name particular Traditions, which she would own and undertake to prove truly Apostolical, and of Divine and constantly binding Authority to the Church. And since she thought it not convenient to descend to particulars, I am of opinion, particular persons in that Communion will not care to meddle in the matter, but rather chuse to refer it to another Council, when they can get one: because, if they should undertake it, it must only be for our sakes; and those of that Communion cannot but know, that nothing less will satisfie such cautious, reasonable people as *Protestants* are, in a matter

of this nature, than ſuch evidence, as is very ſubſtantial and proportionate to the thing to be proved. And could they produce ever ſo good evidence for any particular they will call a Divine Revelation, or Apoſtolical Tradition, it would be of no uſe to thoſe of their own Church, who prefer particular Humane Teſtimony, called by another Name, before all ſort of proper and ſuitable evidence. And after all their pains, though they could produce ſatisfactory evidence (which I affirm to be utterly impoſſible in this caſe) for ſome Tradition which would inforce ſome Point the Scriptures do not inforce, yet this would not do them any ſervice, however it would weaken our Principle, as touching the Perfection of that Body of Divine Revelations we have: For notwithſtanding, we ſhould, in obedience to a Divine Revelation, though roughly proved and evidenced, concur and joyn with them in ſome Point we did not imbrace before; yet the difference betwixt them and us in that matter, would be as great as before; there would ſtill remain a formal difference betwixt us touching this very particular; becauſe, though we ſhould Believe or Practice the ſame thing, yet the formal Reaſon of Believing or Doing it, would be totally different.

So that if any would attempt to produce ſubſtantial evidence for any Revelation diſtinct from the Scriptures, their labour will be wholly uſeleſs, with reference to their Church, unleſs they can produce a Revelation relating to their Church, like that Law the flattering Courtiers of an *Eaſtern* Prince told him they could find, when they were at a loſs for a particular Law, to warrant ſome particular Practice the Prince was inclined unto; though they knew of no Law relating to what was propos'd, yet there was a Law, that the Prince might Command and do what he pleaſed. Such a Revelation our Adverſaries muſt produce, (Indeed, I am apprehenſive, they Act in that Communion, as if they had ſuch a Revelation; but all the miſchief is, they cannot produce valid proof for it) or elſe they muſt be at the trouble of providing diſtinct Revelations for the ſeveral Points in diſpute, and diſtinct Evidence, unleſs they can make a ſhift to croud three or four of their Notions into a ſingle Tradition, and ſo make ſhorter work of it.

In ſhort, the *Proteſtants* do affirm, That Divine Revelation is the only Rule of Chriſtian Religion: That the Holy Scriptures are confeſſedly Divine Revelations: That theſe Holy Scrip-

Scriptures do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of perpetual ſtanding, obliging Uſe to his Church and People. We acknowledge, that were it poſſible for our Adverſaries to produce ſolid proof, that there is any Divine Revelation diſtinct from what theſe Holy Scriptures do contain, which God hath appointed to be of conſtant, perpetual, binding Uſe to his Church, they might thereby invalidate our Principle, which doth affirm, that the Holy Scriptures are the Only Rule by which Chriſtians are to govern themſelves in all Matters of Religion: But yet we affirm, their doing this, would not really advantage their Cauſe; becauſe the ſame Formal difference would remain betwixt them and us after, as before; for though we ſhould be obliged, on their exhibiting ſuch proof for ſome particular Revelation, which ſhould warrant and oblige to own and uſe ſome Doctrine or Practice at preſent in diſpute betwixt us; yet the agreement which would then ſeem to be betwixt them and us, in that particular, would only be material, and not formal; becauſe we ſhould then own the Doctrine or Practice, what is injoyned, purely becauſe taught and commanded by a Divine Revelation, throughly evidenced: And they would own the Doctrine or Practice, the Duty injoyned, purely becauſe taught and commanded by a meer Humane Authority, which they are pleaſed to name Infallible. And it will not be to any purpoſe, for them to undertake a more quick diſpatch in this matter, by talking of an Infallible Judge, for he cannot be Judge and Rule too: There muſt be Divine Revelation, which muſt be the Rule for their Infallible Judge to exerciſe and imploy his Infallible Judgment about. And ſeeing all their attempts to prove their Infallible Judge by Scripture, have been very unfortunate, and without ſucceſs. I may take it for granted, when once they have agreed together, and found out their Infallible Judge, their beſt proof that that Perſon, or Body of Men (which ever they ſhall agree upon) is a Judge, and an Infallible Judge in Matters of Religion, muſt be ſome new Revelation, or ſome old Tradition never hitherto known to be a Divine Revelation; for we muſt have better proof than any that has yet been offered on the behalf of any of their Traditions, before we can entertain them as Divine Revelations. And when they have well proved that Tradition, and its Divine Authority, which ſhall fix and ſettle their Infallible Judge, they muſt ſtill be at the trouble and pains to produce very ſubſtantial proof for every other Tradition they will make a part of the Chriſtian Rule.

For the Authority of their Infallible Judge will not do here, because his Infallibility does not reach to make, nor declare a Rule, but is purely concerned about the true sense and meaning of an acknowledged Rule, when Controversies do arise about the importance of any Expressions contained in that Rule.

But besides all this, *Protestants* have such evidence, as doth create certain assurance, that the Holy Scriptures are fully Perfect, to instruct and direct Believers in all matters of Religion, and do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of necessary and perpetual Use unto his Church: greater evidence cannot be desired, than the express Witness, Testimony, and Declaration of the unerring Spirit of the Faithful and True God. And this we have most plainly, to the unavoidable and full Conviction of every honest, piously disposed, ingenious, and unprejudiced Person, who really owns and believes the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God: And this, you heard before, is the professed Belief of all who profess themselves *Christians*. And if such kind of evidence will not serve peoples turns, I must acknowledge, they are of a temper I do not much care to deal with; for I must confess, I am no great admirer of booted blunderbus Apostles; nor do I think he makes any real Proselites, who only dragoon's Men into a Perswasion: I never lik'd murthering Men for Religion; nor persecuting Men, because their Consciences would not stretch to every body's phancy. I think, whil'st the Scriptures are acknowledged, on all sides, to be Divine Revelations, the greatest and best evidence we can have, in matters of Religion, is plain and express Scripture. And if in all our Disputes with our Adversaries, we did strictly keep within this compass, we should guard and maintain our owe Cause the better, and wound our Adversaries Cause the more fatally: not but that I am very sensible, we have Antiquity, the Fathers, the Primitive Writers, and the most General Councils on our side, either expresly, or by way of silence; thereby certifying us, that no such Points were known, or in question in those days.

But alas! by having ordinary recourse to the Fathers, *&c.* we mightily gratifie our Adversaries; for hereby they get out of the immediate reach of the Sword of the Spirit: And all the Testimonies of Antiquity taken together, in their own strength, will not do the thousandth part of that execution against a Heresy

rely, as one plain and expreſs Scripture will. Beſides, how often do we ſee, that when the greatly Read and Learned, on both ſides, do fall together by the Ears over the Fathers, they lengthen the Diſpute beyond meaſure; and not only bewilder the Hearer or Reader, but even themſelves too; that by the time they are got half through the Diſpute, they have well night forgot what it was they began to diſpute about.

And having ſlipt into this digreſſion, I may even adventure to hint one digreſſion more, relating to the common way of managing Controverſies with our Adverſaries, the *Romaniſts*. It may be, if it be well inquired into, it may appear, that we do not ordinarily proceed in our Controverſial Diſcourſes with them, in that free and ingenious manner we ought, but do too much limit and ſtraighten our ſelves. According to that little meaſure of apprehenſion I have, it ſeems to me moſt expedient and moſt proper for us, in oppoſing our Adverſaries, to maintain *Proteſtantiſm*, or the *Proteſtant Doctrines*, both really and profeſſedly as ſuch; and not to pinnion our ſelves, by pretending to maintain them, as Taught or Owned by particular Communions. The Cauſe is a common Cauſe; and the Arguments we can truly maintain it with, are common Arguments; one Party is no more intereſted in them than another; nor do the Matters in diſpute amongſt our ſelves, concern the Controverſies betwixt us and our Common Adverſaries. Why ſhould we ſo affect and hug our ſelves in our private Notions, and particular Differences, as to pleaſe our ſelves with, or at leaſt, receive and keep up the unreaſonable Remembrance of them. Indeed, I do acknowledge the candor of our Adverſaries, in that they have not improved the advantage they might have taken, to have made ſome Tragical Appearances, by falling upon us, with reference to this very matter, of undertaking to maintain *Proteſtant* Doctrines, meerly as owned by a particular Party: for what doth this properly import, but that we relinquiſh the Common Principle, and undertake, only to maintain our Doctrines, not by the Scripture, as the General and Only Rule of *Chriſtian* Religion, but by the Scripture as limited and bounded by thoſe diſcriminating Terms and Inſtances, whereby we are diſtinguiſhed from all others, who take the Scripture to be the Only Rule in all Matters of Religion. Now, will not this, if inſiſted

on, make our task the harder, and the more confound and perplex our Controverſies? But would it not ſeem odd for a Remonſtrant, or a Contra-Remonſtrant to defend *Chriſtianity*, or the particular Doctrines of *Chriſtianity*, againſt *Jews* or *Heathens*, purely as a Remonſtrant, or a Contra-Remonſtrant? For what have their particular differences to do in matters wherein they all agreed, and in maintaining of that, for which both ſides are equally concerned?

The main of the Controverſy betwixt us and thoſe of the *Romiſh* Communion, is either, whether the Holy Scriptures be the Only Rule in all Matters of Religion? Or, whether thoſe particular Doctrines wherein they and we do differ, have warrant from the Scriptures? And what need we, intreating on theſe points, to intereſt any diſcriminating notions amongſt our ſelves; *As far as we do agree, let us walk by the ſame Rule.* Beſides, by concerning our ſelves for *Proteſtantiſm*, and *Proteſtant Doctrines* (even in oppoſition to our Adverſaries) in common, as fixing the Scriptures to be the Only Rule, and that our particular Doctrine have plain warrant from the Scripture, and thoſe we oppoſe, are either contrary to the Scriptures, or have no warrant at all from thence, we are excuſed from any obligation to trouble our ſelves with defending any unwary, or leſs proper expreſſions, which may have ſlipt from particular Parties, or particular Perſons, in declaring their ſenſe of particular Doctrines; for whether they expreſt themſelves properly, or no; or whether their opinion were right, or no, is not at all material to the Controverſy betwixt thoſe of the *Church of Rome* and us. For if any Parties, or ſingle Perſons, have declared their ſenſe and opinions concerning any Doctrine, or matter of Practice, either that their opinion doth accord with Scripture, or it doth not: if it do, it is the *Proteſtant* Doctrine; if it do not, it is not a *Proteſtant* Doctrine; and ſo it doth not at all affect us; ſince we own, that perſons profeſſing themſelves *Proteſtants*, may miſtake, as well as, we do declare our aſſurance, that thoſe who have been named Infallible, in another Communion, have erred moſt grievouſly. But this we affirm that ſo far as any do keep ſtrictly and cloſely to the Holy Scriptures, they cannot miſtake. And *Proteſtants* have no real concern to vindicate any Party, or Perſon, any further than they do keep unto the Scripture.

But now to return from theſe digreſſions, unto what was ſaid before, *viz.* That *Proteſtants* have ſuch evidence, as doth create certain

certain assurance, that the Holy Scriptures are fully perfect, to instruct and direct Believers in all matters of Religion, and do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of necessary and perpetual use unto his Church. I need not relate the whole evidence that might be produced on this occasion. I will therefore content my self with these two particulars, relating to this matter, which certainly must sway powerfully with them who are under an influence which is truly Religious.

The first, is this:

1. That the Holy Spirit of God hath expresly declared, that the Holy Scriptures are compleat and perfect to all the ends and purposes of Divine Revelations. Hear how large and particular the Holy Spirit of God is, in declaring the Fullness and Perfection of the Scriptures. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. *And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be Perfect, throughly furnished unto all Good Works.*

2. The same Holy Spirit hath solemnly devoted to the most dreadful Curse of Almighty God, whomsoever shall be so arrogant and presumptuous, as to offer any other Doctrine besides what the Holy Scriptures do teach, as a Divine Revelation. *Gal.* 1. 8. *But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Now if people will pretend to produce other Divine Revelations, which God hath appointed to be of perpetual use to his Church; either those must invalidate these Holy Scriptures; or else these Holy Scriptures must invalidate them; they cannot consist well together. If we will own and stick to the Holy Scriptures, we must reject whatever additional Discoveries shall be produced; because, the Spirit hath, in these Scriptures, excluded them.

What hath been discoursed concerning the evidence *Protestants* have for their great and main Principle, may justly promt to take notice of two things.

1. That they who would hinder and discourage people from reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, do give them just occasion to suspect, that they have none of the honestest and most

moſt commendable deſigns to manage. We are very certain, the Holy Prophets of God, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, were Perſons beloved of God, and Perſons who were greatly concerned for Peoples Spiritual Welfare; and we are as certain, that theſe were very much, and in good earneſt, in preſſing, exciting, and perſwading the common ſort of People to read and ſtudy the Scriptures; they command them in the Name of God, to read and learn the Scriptures, and thoſe Revelations of the Mind of God, which were communicated unto them; read *Deut.* 31. 11, 12, 13. *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. *John* 5. 39. *Col.* 3. 16. Nay, does not the deſign and end for which God hath made his Will known, and caus'd it to be committed to Writing, manifeſt and prove our Duty evidently enough? For what end hath God given the Holy Scriptures unto his Church and People? Are we not aſſured that the Scriptures were written for our Learning, for our Inſtruction, for our Admonition? *&c.* And muſt we not read them then? How will they anſwer theſe ends, if we muſt not conſult them? Were not the Scriptures written for our Learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope? Read and conſider *Rom.* 15. 4. Have we not then too much ground to ſuſpect, that thoſe who would take, or keep our Bibles from us, are Enemies to our Faith, Patience, Comfort, Hope, and Happineſs? Is not the Word of God that Sword of the Spirit, with which we are to defend our ſelves, and worſt our Spiritual Enemies? *Epheſ.* 6. 17. And now what reaſon have we to take them for our Friends, who would lay us open, and expoſe us Naked to the Aſſaults of Sathan and his Inſtruments?

The Holy Penmen of the Scriptures did, by the direction of the Bleſſed Spirit, commend People for applying themſelves to the Holy Scriptures, and endeavouring to improve in the knowledge of them. See *Pſal.* 1. 2. *Act.* 17. 11. *Act.* 18. 24. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And it is certain, that the People of God (of every rank and condition) under the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation, were obliged by Eſpecial Appointment from God, to take care to read, and labour after a continual Increaſe in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Now, can we imagine, that God having given us a larger Diſcovery of his Mind, doth diſpence with our neglect to ſearch the Scriptures.

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Can thoſe who are againſt the Lay-Peoples reading of the Scripture, find any Command of Chriſt, requiring them not to read the Scripture? Can they produce any Condemnation or Cenſure from the Prophets, from Chriſt, or from his Apoſtles, againſt thoſe who ſhall read the Word of God? Or can they make it appear, that any of theſe did ever commend People for their neglecting to read the Scripture? If they cannot do any of all this, let their Pretences and Self-vindications touching this matter, be never ſo plauſible, we may reſt aſſured, there is nothing ſolid and ſubſtantial in what they ſay; for there cannot be any Reaſon againſt God. The more ſubtle and cunning their Pretences are, the worſe Men they manifeſt themſelves to be; becauſe they abuſe thoſe Abilities which ſhould have been applied another way, and might, had they been uſed aright, have been very ſerviceable to promote the Intereſt of Truth and Holineſs.

The moſt plauſible Pretence they do produce for their prohibiting People the common uſe of the Scripture, is, That the ordinary ſort of People would be very apt to abuſe and wreſt the Scriptures to their own Deſtruction, ſhould they be permitted to have free recourſe unto them. But allowing, that People may wreſt the Scripture, and make ſome other uſe of it than they ought, this is not an Inconvenience which will make null, and diſcharge Men from God's Command of reading and ſearching the Scripture. You may, with as much reaſon, oblige Men to forbear the uſe of wholeſome Food, Meat and Drink, and ſtarve themſelves to death, becauſe ſome, by their Intemperance and Exceſs, do abuſe wholeſome Food, and make it an occaſion of dangerous Diſtempers and Diſeaſes, yea, and Death it ſelf. You may as lawfully deprive People of their Corporal, as of their Spiritual Food.

Beſides, this very particular hath been foreſeen, and taken notice of, by the Pen-men of the Holy Scripture, if we interpret 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. according to the uſual acceptation of that place, by thoſe who do alledge it for their purpoſe, as to this matter. And yet there is not one word there, to oblige People, on that account, to deſiſt from the reading of the Scriptures. The People may, and ought to be warned to take heed how they read the Scriptures, and that they avoid Errours, and pervert not the Word of God. But the Scriptures are not therefore to be detained from them: God hath not thought fit to provide

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ſuch a Remedy againſt peoples abuſing his Word, as this is, of keeping it intirely from them. Yea, this very Apoſtle doth, as it were, in the next verſes, perſwade them to the due and right ſtudy, and improvement of the Scriptures, that they may avoid the Errours others do fall into, by abuſing them, and may *increaſe in the knowledge of Chriſt.*

It is undeniably evident, that this ſame Apoſtle doth, in this ſame Epiſtle, commend peoples reading of the Scriptures, and attending unto them. *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star ariſe in your Hearts.* 2 Pet. 1. 19.

And, however it is common, to attribute the Riſe of Errours to the common ſort of peoples having the free uſe of the Scriptures; yet, upon due examination, it will be found, that the worſt and moſt fatal Errous have ſprung from, and been advanced by them, who pretending to more Knowledge and Learning, and Abilities than the reſt of Mankind, have preſumed to appropriate to themſelves the intire Cuſtody or Interpretation of the Scriptures.

Nay, it is truly obſerved, by one who appears to have conſulted Antiquity with much care and diligence, That "The Laity ſo well underſtood their "Faith, that many times, they, by their ſa- "gacity, diſcerned the ſly Inſinuations of "Errour, in the Sermons of their Unſound and Heretical Bi- "ſhops; and ſo occaſioned them to be condemned by Synodical "Sentences: and through the radicated ſenſe of Faith, would "never be brought to any of the Alterations made by any cor- "rupt Councils; nor would ever reſt under their Prevarications, "till the Primitive Faith recovered, and vacated all thoſe Sy- "nodical Prevarications; as may be ſeen in all the *Arian* "*Hiſtory*; and particularly, the relation given, of the vulgar Sa- "gacity and Zeal, to detect and repreſs that Hereſy in St. *Hie-* "*rom* againſt the *Luciferians.*

Catholick Ballance. pag. 19.

If this Notion, of keeping the Scriptures from the people, or of obliging the People to underſtand the Scriptures no otherwiſe than thoſe would interpret them, who were arrogant enough to claim, and aſſume to themſelves this priviledge, had intirely prevail'd, when our Bleſſed Saviour was on Earth, God only knows, how much our Saviour's Reputation might have

have suffered, even in succeeding Generations. For, as these presumptuous Persons did pretend, that the Key of the Scripture did hang only at their Girdle, & they refused to acknowledge Christ was the *Messiah*, the Son of God; and they both accused him as an Impostor, a Deceiver, an Ill Man; and charged and censured the People as ignorant Persons, who did not understand the Law, little better than *Hereticks*, a cursed Generation: and all this was, because they did listen unto Christ, follow Him, and Believe in Him; that is, did undertake to judge of Matters by the Scripture; and to determine this was the Saviour, the Messiah, *&c.* propheſied of, and promiſed in the Scriptures. The Chief *Prieſts*, the *Scribes*, the *Phariſees*, they were all against Christ, and would fain have perſwaded the People to have taken their Interpretation of the Scriptures, and to have pinn'd their Faith on their Sleeves, and not undertake to judge for themſelves in ſo high and myſterious a Point as this, concerning the *Meſſiah*, was. They would have perſwaded them, that this *Jeſus* was a very Cheat, and that all the things he did, which won their admiration, were wrought by the Intimacy he had with, and the Power he borrowed from the Prince of the Devils; and that the *Meſſiah* muſt be quite of another Make from this ſame *Jeſus*.

Now, what work would have been in the World, if none muſt have read and underſtood the Scriptures in any other ſenſe but what the Topping-Men, and Chief Leaders of the *Jewiſh Church*, had aſſigned? What contempt do theſe Monopolizers of Knowledge expreſs againſt the People, who would not ſubmit to their Determinations? How angry were they, when any dared to declare how they reſpected and admired Christ? *Then came the Officers to the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees, and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The Officers anſwered, never Man ſpake like this Man. Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived? Have any of the Rulers or Phariſees believed on him? But this People who knoweth not the Law, are Curſed.* John 7. 45. to the 50th.

If People mean fairly and honeſtly, why do they deſire to have Folks bred up in Ignorance? Indeed, if the ordinary ſort of People be well verſ'd in the Holy Scriptures, it will not be eaſie to impoſe upon them. Why cannot Men, that would be Teachers now a days, be as open and plain as the Prophets, and as Christ, and as his Apoſtles were? Theſe came not to

vent any counterfeit false Ware, and therefore they were willing the People ſhould examine and try what they taught them: They were for the People's reading and ſearching of the Scriptures, and judging of the Doctrines which were taught them by thoſe Holy Scriptures, which had been delivered unto them. They came to deliver People out of Darkneſs, not to keep them in, or lead them unto Darkneſs. And thoſe who are their true Succeſſors and Followers, will do the like. If Men have no Notions to ſcatter about, and perſwade People to ſwallow and ſubmit to, but what are ſound, and true, and good, and which are authoriſed by Jeſus Chriſt, they will have no occaſion to be aſhamed or afraid, that People ſhould examine them by the Scripture. None flee from the Light, but thoſe whoſe Doctrines or Practices will not bear the Light. Chriſt's Doctrines did accord very well with thoſe Divine Revelations thoſe *Jews* had amongſt them: But the Unſcriptural Traditions they had got amongſt them, and our Saviour's Doctrines, could not ſtand together. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no Light in them.* Iſaiah 8. 20.

Secondly, Thoſe who profeſs themſelves *Proteſtants*, ought to take care, that they be well fixed and ſettled in the *Proteſtant* Religion.

The Apoſtles often require their Followers and Diſciples, and thoſe they write unto, to *Stand faſt in the Faith*: 1 Cor. 16. 13. And to *Contend earneſtly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*: Jude 3. And to *Strive together for the Faith of the Goſpel*: Phil. 1. 27. Now, by theſe and the like Expreſſions, which you meet with in the Apoſtolick Writing, they plainly, *firſt*, warn them of the danger there is, of Peoples Apoſtatizing from the True Faith and Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, after that they have made a Profeſſion of the ſame. And *ſecondly*, excite and ſtir thoſe up, who make a Profeſſion of the True Faith, to take care that their Minds and Hearts may be throughly fixed and ſettled in the Faith, leaſt they ſhould yield and waver, and decline, when Storms and Tryals ſhall ariſe, and their conſtancy ſhall be aſſaulted.

And, if there be but too much ground to fear, that many who make a Profeſſion of the Truth, will Apoſtatize, and forſake it, when they ſhall be called to bear witneſs to it, in ſome Inſtances which are ungrateful to Fleſh and Blood. It highly concerns

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all, who at present profess True Christianity, to look well to it, that they be so established and confirmed in what they profess, that if a day of Tryal should come, they may not loose their Crown, destroy their Souls, or betray the Truth.

First, Those who do profess the True Religion, may afterwards Apostatize from, and relinquish it. And there is too great occasion to fear, that many, however forward they appear in Profession, will do so, should they be tryed in any difficult and beloved Instances: I do not mean, that People who have long habituated themselves to profess the *Christian* Religion, will easily be brought to an open and avowed renouncing of the Name of *Christianity*; as though none could be justly charged with Apostacy from the Truth, but those who can vye with *Julian* for impudence, in contemning and trampling under foot the very Name and Profession of the Son of God. The estate of those who proceed so far, is beyond measure dreadful. *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6.

But there are two things, which the Scriptures more especially insist on, as imported by People's Apostatizing from the True Faith, and which, People are generally too prone unto; and both which are very displeasing unto, and greatly provoking of God.

1. Departing from the Purity and Simplicity of the Faith of the Gospel, espousing and imbracing, together with those Doctrines, and Practices which Christ hath authorized in his Holy Scriptures, other Opinions and Practices, which are destructive of the Truth and power of Religion. *Christianity* is as really impaired and injured by evil mixtures, as by open professed opposition. The Apostacy the Apostles spake of, which was to accompany, or rather, constitute that great Antichristian State, they foretel, would have such a vast, and large, and durable Empire in the Christian World, seems plainly to be of this kind. The great Fundamental Doctrines of *Christianity* should be retained in outward Profession, but yet other Doctrines should be introduced, and be so vehemently imposed, and insisted on, that thereby the main Essential of Religion should be slighted, oppressed, and become in a great measure useless. And way has been made for these Innovations, by *first*, forging some gross Impostures, and counterfeiting some strange things, to which they have given the Name of Mi-

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racles, and so unwary, ignorant People have been prevailed with to entertain no better than Diabolical Delusions as Divine Instructions and Commands: very agreeable to what the Apostle foretells of Antichrist's coming, *After the working of Satan with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders*: 2 Thes. 2. 9.

2. Altering the nature and use of many things which were Innovated by the pious Antients, without any Divine Authority, and purely by the conduct of a warm Zeal, and a devout Intention. Had no further progress been made in those Instances, than those Antients made, little prejudice would thence have happened to Religion. But God is so jealous of his own Honour, that usually, when People manifest they have an Opinion that God hath not carefully enough provided for his own Cause, and therefore they will guard and fence, and provide more effectually for it; He blasts all those Devices, and suffers such Humane Inventions to be occasions of more than ordinary trouble; and sometimes, to be prosecuted so far, as to make a formal and mortal Opposition to the Vitals of Religion.

3. Depressing the Offices and Devotional Duties of Religion with unreasonable heaps of outward Formalities, and Ritual Observations; that so the Senses might be superfluously carest, and by accomodating the Matters of Religion too much to the Rules of Carnal Policy. By this means, inward Seriousness, and the Spirituality of Religion, have been dispenc't with; and Peoples Minds have been rendred lax and vain, aiery and garish. And having been thus inured for some time to these meer Externals, which they have taken upon trust, they have at last been so easie, as to content themselves with an Implicite Faith, and have rather chose to swallow any thing that should be offered them, whole, than put themselves to the trouble to enquire into its Nature, Rise, and Grounds.

4. Finding out ways to reconcile what they stile Religion, to Men's Carnal Lusts, and Natural Tempers and Constitutions; devising easier ways (as they pretend) to Heaven, than any of the Saints in former Ages, were acquainted with: devising new ways to satisfie for Sin, and undertaking to save Mens Souls after they are dead in Sins.

Hence there is something Men call Religion, that must certainly please the Careless, and (as some tell us) as certainly

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save them. If you are melancholly, and inclined to ſtrictneſs and Corporal Mortifications, they will humour you in that; they can provide you Pennances and Securities, which ſhall ſufficiently vex and macerate your Fleſh. If you are ſoft and tender if you would have a Jovial Religion, and would allow your ſelves in wantonneſs and exceſs, *&c.* and yet not miſcarry at laſt, they can fit you with Indulgencies and Pardons, and will not queſtion to ſend you ſafely to Heaven, by vertue of the Merits and Righteouſneſs of ſome of their Antient Friends, who never had a Being in the World; or, of others, who tho they might have a Being here on Earth, in all probability, never got to Heaven themſelves: I am ſure, they never had Righteouſneſs enough of their own to carry them to Heaven, however it is grown ſo bulky ſince they left it behind them, and has crept into the Churche's Treaſury. But the Apoſtle acquaints us, that *Antichriſt* will come *with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh*: 2 Theſ. 2. 10.

Secondly, Declining from their Love to, and Zeal for the Faith, growing cold and indifferent concerning the Faith; when People have not that affection and concern for the Faith, with which they ſeemed at firſt to entertain and welcome it. See *Rev.* 2. 4, 5.

People are too prone thus to Apoſtatize from the True Faith, after that they have made a Profeſſion of it: and if Matters be well conſidered, there is not much ground to wonder it ſhould be ſo: For,

1. People do too ordinarily make a Profeſſion of the Faith, upon unſuitable Motives and Principles: not becauſe they underſtand it, and have their Conſciences convinced of its truth and excellency; but meerly becauſe it is the faſhion and cuſtome of the People where they live, to make ſuch a Profeſſion; or, it is a Profeſſion that has got into repute; or, upon ſome other ſuch mean and fickle Account. Men that have no ſound Principles, will ever be for that Profeſſion which is uppermoſt, and is attended with moſt Pomp and Pleaſure, *&c.* Chriſt had Followers in abundance, whilſt he fed them with Loaves; but how did they fall off, and ſhrink away, when they failed of their Expectations. *Joh.* 6. 26.

2. Multitudes content themſelves with a meer notional knowledge in Religion, and take no due care to digeſt Truths, and turn the Principles of Religion into ſolid Nouriſhment. Now the

the Doctrines of Religion, if they do not ſink down into our Hearts, if they have not a powerful efficacy on our Affections, if they do not put us invincibly upon ſuch a Courſe of Life, as bears ſome proportion with their nature and tendency, they have no faſt hold on us, they will ſoon evaporate, we ſhall eaſily part with them. *Luke* 6. 49. Let the Food we eat, be never ſo good and wholeſome for the kind, if we do not digeſt it, if our Stomacks do not turn it into good Chyle and Nutriment, it will ſoon become nanſeous, and the leaſt provocation will make us vomit it up again.

3. God doth often, in juſt Judgment, leave thoſe to be hurried away by an evil Spirit of Deluſion and Impiety, who having long injoyed the means for their inſtruction and ſettlement in the True Faith, have made no careful improvement of the ſame, for thoſe ends. God ordinarily ſuffers ſuch to be led away by *Sathan* and his lying Emiſſaries, into Opinions diametrically oppoſite to the plaineſt Truths, as well as to thoſe vile affections which prompt to all uncleanneſs, and practices which are inconvenient, even according to the dictates of natural Light. Such are a ready and ſelf-prepared prey to him, whoſe coming is after the workings of *Sathan*, &c. 2 *Theſ.* 2. 9, 10, 11, 12.

4. Over-loading Eccleſiaſtical Offices with Worldly Revenues, Temporal Power and Dignities, hath contributed very much to the prejudice of *Chriſtianity*: Too true did that voice prove, *This day is poiſon powred into the Church.* Theſe things are powerful baits, and ſtrong temptations to ambitious, covetuous, domineering Perſons. Thoſe who have ſuch Offices ſo dreſt up and beautified, to confer and beſtow, need not doubt, but they ſhall find Advocates enough, for their own particular Opinions and Ways, though never ſo Erroneous. And when Errours and Superſtitions are back'd with Power, Greatneſs, Wealth, &c. Oh, what multitudes will they draw after them! Beſides, when thoſe who have not a mighty concern for the Intereſts of real Religion, are too much advanc't in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, and rais'd above themſelves, it too uſually falls out, that an arbitrary Imperiouſneſs ſtarts up, and prevails, and then things of no great moment, and for which Chriſt and his Apoſtles thought not fit to ingage their Authority, or lay any ſtreſs of Religion on, get into their heads, and muſt needs be made

made terms of *Christian Communion*, that they may be sure their Authority is acknowledged. What Contests and Divisions have been raised and created by this means? What Heats and Animosities have been this way occasioned? Hereby Differences have been carried to such heights, that at last Religion it self is even lost in the Quarrels commenc't about its Vestments and Trappings. How have People's zeal or fury about things, called Indifferent, extirpated or quenched all serious and due concernment for the true Interests of Religion! 'Tis to be feared, that hence there is occasioned an indifferency in the minds of multitudes, touching the great Substantials of Religion, which doth surpass the Indifferency of the things themselves, for which we have so desperately contended. The love of Worldly Grandure carried *Demas* away from the Faith, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. And over much concernedness for little Extra-Religious Matters, gave the Apostle ground to suspect, that those who were so affected, would not be so honest, firm, and faithful to the Faith of the Gospel, as good *Christians* ought to be: Observe how he expostulates with them, and lays down the grounds of his fears touching them. *Gal.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12.

5. God permits Afflictions, Persecutions, and Sufferings to be brought on them who profess his Truth, not only to try the Graces of the Faithful, and to make their Graces appear more illustrious by their eminent exercise; but that Hypocrites and meer Formalists, who have no real love for his Truths, nor give any hearty assent unto them, may be discovered, and have their disguises taken away. In times of peace and quiet, and whil'st the true Religion is on the thriving hand in the World, many pretend to it, who too much resemble *Erasmus*'s Good Christian, who appeared a very zealous Professor, he would always have a New Testament hanging at his Girdle, on one side; but then he must have a Bottle of good Sack hanging on the other side.

As long as the True Faith hath outward Honours, Preferment, Carnal Pleasures, and Ease accompanying it, it will not want Followers and Attendants: but when Storms and Persecutions do arise, and it is separated from these external Allurements, they will soon shake hands with Religion, and court whatsoever shall be dress't up in its former Robes. Such as espouse the True Religion, not for its native Excellency, but for its gorgeous Attire, and great Dowry in this World, will in all probability, when

when Perſecutions ariſe, part with their Faith rather than their Pleaſures, Wealth, and Eaſe; they will ſooner throw away their Bibles rather than their Bottles. 1 *Joh.* 2. 19. *Mar.* 13. 20, 21.

Now, if there be ſuch danger of people's Apoſtatizing from the True Faith, after they have made a profeſſion of it, it muſt certainly very importantly concern all who profeſs the *Proteſtant* Religion, that is, *True Chriſtianity*, as taught and delivered in the Holy Scriptures, and as purged and reformed by the guidance and direction of this Divine Rule, from all thoſe Errours and Corruptions which have, either through people's heedleſsneſs, crept into the profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, or, through deſign, have been ſlily uſhered into it, or, by imperiouſneſs, have been forc't upon it: I ſay, it very highly concerns them to take care, that their Minds and Hearts be ſo fixed and ſettled in the Faith of the Goſpel, that they may never be removed from their Conſtancy, that *they may not be as Children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the ſlight of Men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lye in wait to deceive.* Eph. 4. 14.

It ſhould therefore be our care to get our Minds furniſhed with clear diſtinct Notions of thoſe Truths in which the Scriptures do inſtruct people: It is not enough, that we can talk over, in a general way, the Doctrines of Religion; we ought to labour for an explicite knowledge of Divine Revelations; ſo that we may be able to prove and confirm every part of our Profeſſion by expreſs and clear Scriptures; 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. *The Ignorant Man will be always wavering.* Yea, we ſhould ſtrive to get the Truths we profeſe and underſtand, very ſtrongly indeared unto our Hearts, ſo as to prefer them above all Worldly and Carnal Intereſts; and to have our Affections, yea, our whole Souls brought under their Power and Influence, their Government and Soveraignty: our Souls ſhould ſo cleave unto them, they ſhould be ſo precious and dear unto us, that neither Frowns nor Smiles, Promiſes nor Threats, may make any unhappy impreſſion on us; but the more bluſtering any Storms may be, which can ariſe, the deeper root we may take, and grow the more firm and ſtable. *Phil.* 1. 27, 28. For,

1. We muſt expect to meet with Tryals and Sufferings for the Faith of the Goſpel, which will overwhelm and ruine us, if we be not well provided againſt them. Our Paſſage to Glo-

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ry, is through many Tribulations. We have many and various Enemies, who will miſchief us, and obſtruct us all they can, who will do their utmoſt to prevail with us, both by fair and foul means, to make ſhipwrack both of Faith and a good Conſcience: We are not only expoſed to the malice, rage, and ſpite of abſurd and unreaſonable Men, but to the craft and fury too of thoſe infernal Fiends, who prompt aud excite their carnal and earthly Tools and Inſtruments, to vent and vomit forth their rancour and ſpleen againſt the True Faith and its Profeſſors. See *Eph.* 6. 12, 13. 1 *Pet.* 5. 8, 9. *Rev.* 2. 10. If you be not well fixed in the Truth, how can you expect to hold out, when temptations and ſufferings ſhall come? When you ſhall be in danger of looſing Eſtate, Liberty, all that is dear to you in the World, yea, Life it ſelf, for your Religion? Did not the Houſe built upon the Sand fall, when the Rain deſcended, and the Winds blew, and beat upon it? *Mat.* 7. 26, 27.

2. Apoſtacy from the True Faith is a very hainous provoking ſin: is not this to offer God the utmoſt affront we can, and in effect, to ſay all manner of evil of him? Do we not hereby charge him with being the greateſt Impoſtor that ever was? Is not this to throw the foulest dirt that is poſſible upon Religion; yea, openly to avow, that Sathan and his drudgery are much better, more ligible than Chriſt and his moſt Holy Faith? That God is not to be truſted, and that his Religion is not what he repreſents it? O what abominable, what innumerable, what monſtrous wickedneſſes are bred in the womb of Apoſtacy! And what direful conſequences and fruits may thoſe expect, who thus affront, and incenſe the Almighty God againſt themſelves! He will not have a gracious regard for ſuch: He will caſt off, and puniſh ſeverely, all thoſe that caſt him off, and deal treacherouſly with Him. *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith, but if any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* Heb. 10. 38. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt will reject them, and be aſhamed of them, when he ſhall appear in all his Glory. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.* Mark 8. 38. Though you ſet no value on Chriſt's Love at preſent; and care for no more, but that you may have the Countenance of great Perſons, and injoy the Pleaſures and Wealth of the World; yet remember, that it will not be long, before ye ſhall have other appre-

ſenſions of things than now you have: It will not be long, before you ſhall perceive all theſe things you prefer before the Faith of the Goſpel, to be very empty, and void of all ſatisfaction, and full of torment and horrour: when Chriſt ſhall appear in Glory, with his Holy Angels, all theſe things will fail you: and how you will howl and roar, and complain then? What tears will you then ſhed? How will you curſe your Apoſtacy, and all that helpt it forward? And now, when your Caſe is thus helpleſs, thus dreadful, and all your Comforters are gone, the Lord Jeſus and his Mercy will fail you too; he will ſend you to them, whoſe favour you prefer'd before his, who will tremble and quake as much as you; and to your Wealth, which will then diſappear; and to your beloved Pleaſures, which will then be bitterer than *Gall* and *Wormwood*: you muſt only expect to behold his frowns, and to feel the terrible diſcoveries of his inſupportable diſpleaſure: you can expect no favour at his Hands. See *Prov.* 1. 24. to the end. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 7, 8, 9. Nay, you have no good ground to hope you ſhall proſper in any of thoſe deſigns you intend to drive forward by, or under your Apoſtacy. God doth very often notably blaſt ſuch projects; He cauſeth ſome remarkable and very fatal Curſe to accompany thoſe who relinquiſh his Cauſe and Truth. What was *Judas* the better for his thirty pieces of Silver? What a ſorry Plaiſter was this for a wounded Conſcience? What a poor comfort to a juſtly deſpairing Soul? What a fearful end have they ordinarily come to, who have forſaken Chriſt and the Goſpel for Preferment, Wealth, or any Carnal Intereſts?

3. The more we are confirmed in the Faith, the greater meaſure of inward Comfort we may confidently look for, if we ſhould be called to ſuffer for the Truth. God will not leave ſuch comfortleſs, they ſhall have experience of his gracious, refreſhing Preſence and Supports. The Diſciples, when publickly diſgraced and whipt, *they went away rejoycing, that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for the Name of Chriſt.* See *Acts* 5. 41. 2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4, 5.

4. You will hereby be in a capacity of doing others eminent ſervice, by your Inſtruction, and Counſel, and Example. It is a great mercy not to cumber the World, not to live uſeleſsly and unprofitably, to do real good Services to people in our Generation: nay, more, you will hereby be in a capacity of doing much to retrieve the Credit and Honour of Religion; which has

has indeed been horridly betraid, and proſtituted by Hypocrites, and wicked pretenders to it.

5. The Promiſe of God is only to thoſe who ſtand faſt, who do perſevere and overcome. A Profeſſion, be it never ſo good and Orthodox for the matter of it, will turn to no good and comfortable account to particular Perſons, unleſs they faithfully adhere to, and perſiſt therein. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life.* Rom. 2. 7. *To him than overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.* Rev. 2. 7. Rev. 2. 5. *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son.* Rev. 21. 7.

Theſe, and conſiderations of the like nature, which will eaſily occur unto you, ſhould make ſome impreſſion on you. Have you had your Bibles ſo long, and means of Inſtruction, ſo much above all others, who are of the contrary Perſwaſion; and what, will you now throw away your Bibles, as being imperfect? Will you hood-wink your ſelves, or be content to be led blindfold, by Guides that either cannot, or will not ſee? Are you weary of the glorious Light of the Goſpel? What ſort of people are they in St. *Paul's* Judgment, who diſlike the glorious Light of the Goſpel? 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. Can you now at laſt be contented with the poor Glow-worm light of ſimple Tradition; or, an uncertain wavering of *Ignis fatuus*, which certainly leads all who fooliſhly reſign up themſelves to its conduct, out of the true way into very hazardous Inconveniences? Quit you like Men, yea, quit you like Chriſtians; labour and ſtrive to get your Minds and Hearts juſtly fixed in the Religion you profeſs. Be not ſo ſoft and eaſie, be not ſo fooliſh and inconſiderable, be not ſo unreaſonable, ſo diſtracted, ſo irreligious, as to ſuffer your ſelves to be ſo frighted out of your Religion, or flattered and collogued, cheated, and childiſhly allured out of it; nor yet to be ſo jeared and laught, and lampooned out of it; and then you'l be pritty ſafe: for their Arguments and Reaſonings (if you are wiſe) will never do you hurt.

The Religion you profeſs, contains all in it that is neceſſary, yea, that can be really uſeful to any Man, in order unto his having a ſafe and ſure conduct to Heaven; and, why ſhould any Man deſire to go further? None of the Apoſtles, none of the antient Martyrs, dared either to die for, or teach any other Doctrines

than what your Religion doth comprize. And what! will it not content you to keep pace with them? Muſt you needs exceed and outſtrip them? Take heed, the more ambitious, proud, and preſumptuous you are, the leſs ſafe you are. *Lucifer* and his Conſrades had the moſt dreadful and unhappieſt fall that ever Creatures had; and it may be, to be wiſe above, or (if you like the Phraſe better) to be Religious beyond the Scripture, may in the end, prove to have a great Affinity with that they were guilty of. And if ſo, the puniſhment of that fault, muſt bear ſome proportion with the other. I would cheriſh as much charity, with reference to thoſe who manifeſt any pious Sentiments, in the Perſwaſion contrary to ours, as is poſſible. But yet I muſt needs ſay, that no ſolid proof hath ever yet been produced, that any Perſons ever yet ſuffered death comfortably for any of their peculiar and proper Doctrines taken abſtractedly from thoſe which we juſtly profeſs, and was accepted with God for ſo doing. But we have Inſtances enough, of thoſe who have joyfully laid down their Lives for the Doctrines we profeſs, abſtractedly from all thoſe wherein they differ from us; that is, thoſe which they have added to the Scriptures, and the ſuffering, and bearing witneſs to the Truths we own and profeſs, have been of great account with God. Should the worſt you can imagine follow on your firm adhering to the Faith you profeſs, *viz.* That you ſhall be perſecuted and ſuffer for it; yet this ſhould not ſtartle nor diſcompoſe you. That is but a ſorry Religion, that is not worth ſuffering for. There has been more Blood cheerfully parted with, more Tortures joyfully endured for the Religion you profeſs, than for any, it may be, for all other Cauſes in the World. If you are called to ſuffer on this Account, your Cauſe is ſo good, you need not be afraid of any Enemies terrours, you have no occaſion to be troubled. 1 *Pet.* 3. 14. The Comfort is unexpreſſible, which you may warrantably expect. The Holy Spirit is promiſed to be a Comforter, more eſpecially, to thoſe who are perſecuted, and who ſuffer for this Religion. *Joh.* 16. 7. What glorious Rewards are there for you in Heaven? The more like you are to Chriſt in his Sufferings, the more you ſhall reſemble him in Glory. *Rom.* 8. 17. *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. Alas! conſider matters well, though the worſt ſhould come to the worſt. Shall you looſe your Eſtates, your Wealth, your Houſes, your Friends, your Relations, yea, your Lives? And what then! What are theſe to your Souls! What are theſe to Eternal Glo-

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ry! These are poor, mean, uncertain, perishing things at best; these may be taken away from you on other Accounts: you may have all these, and yet no Comfort. But you may be exercised, (will you say) with cruel Usages, with Tortures impossible, according to Humane Judgment, to be born with any patience. Be it so, make the worst you can of it, they cannot be answerable, for vehemence and horrour, to the Torments in Hell; they cannot lie in the Ballance with the Glory and Joy of Heaven. *Rom.* 8. 18. Be they never so great, one smile from Christ will render you insensible of the pian. How many, upon the Racks, and in Flames, for this Religion, have publickly declared and manifested they felt no pain? And have you such numerous examples and presidents, take heart then, and go on as they did, joyfully in the strength of you God. How many have ventured all, and sustained all, both in former Ages, and in this present Age, in a neighbouring Countrey, with astonishing Joy, for this self same Religion? But Oh! what will you loose, and what must you suffer, if you wickedly depart from your God, and renounce his Truth? Would you be in *Judas* his despair, or sustain the horrour *Spira* was filled with, for Worldly Favour and Preferment? Would you be willing, for ease and pleasure here, to be the object of God's heaviest displeasure for ever? To be shut out of Heaven, to be continually followed with God's Curse? To be a perpetual Companion of Devils, and the worst Sinners? To lie roaring and howling, to all Eternity, in unquenchable flames? In a word, consider how the Faith you profess, is the Faith which God Almighty hath taught and appointed, which the Lord Jesus hath born witness unto, and sealed with his Blood, which the Apostles preached to the World, and suffered for; the Faith which has been justified and confirmed by multitudes of most real and undeniable Miracles; a Faith that is pure and peaceable, and tends most intirely to propagate and increase all that is truely excellent and praise-worthy amongst Men; a Faith which God hath taken care of in all Ages of the Christian World, and which assures its sincere Professors of things incomprehensibly great and glorious hereafter, and fills them with unspeakable peace and comfort at present, amidst all the Suffering they can be exposed to, on its account; a Faith God hath wonderfully freed from the Corruptions which were formerly mixed with it, in these Nations; and for which, He hath often and even miraculously appeared, in discovering and

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blaſting the projects, the deſigns, and the attempts of its moſt ſubtle and unreconcileable Enemies: a Faith your Anceſtors, after mature conſideration, priz'd above all their worldly Intereſts, and Lives: a Faith, they took a great deal of care and pains to have tranſmitted to you pure and undefiled: a Faith, which brought with it multitudes of outward Bleſſings; and which occaſioned theſe Nations to be eas'd of a Yoke, which all the Inhabitants, who had ingenious ſenſe, complained often of, and groaned under: a Faith you cannot part with, but in all probability, you will again involve your ſelves in Calamities and Miſeries, like to thoſe out of which your Predeceſſors ſtrove with all their might to extricate themſelves. Have you an ambition now, to expoſe your ſelves and your Poſterity to all the miſchief and evil, which people of the adverſe perſwaſion, have been known induſtrious and unwearied to bring upon thoſe they look upon as Hereticks? Are you reſolved to pull down with your own hands, upon your ſelves, all the ſad and direful Plagues which are reſerved to be inflicted, in the next World, on them who perfidiouſly betray the Faith of the Goſpel, and wickedly Apoſtatize from the True Religion? If not, then take care, and look well to your ſelves, and ſee that you be fixed and confirmed in the *Proteſtant Religion*. And therefore,

1. Be ſure you be built upon the true Foundation. Take heed you profeſs not the True Faith, meerly becauſe it is owned by any Society of ſome particular extrinſical denomination: any particular Church may fall. There is a Body of Men now in the World, who aſſume to themſelves a very glorious Title; and yet, when a juſt enquiry is made, and the largeſt allowances Charity can prompt to, are yielded them, that Society can only paſs for a very corrupt part of the *Chriſtian* Church: and yet the antient Inhabitants of that place where the Head of this Society hath fixed his *See*, were a people, in St. *Paul*'s time, ſo hearty in, and true to the Doctrines of Chriſt, their Faith was ſpoken of throughout all the World. *Rom.* 1. 8. Where are any tracts and footſteps now, of thoſe Churches you read of in the *Revelations*? And yet God never forſaketh any, till they firſt forſake him. There has been, I fear there is ſtill, altogether a fault amongſt us, that we are immoderately concerned for the credit and outward grandure of particular Parties; and Chriſtians are reſpected, not for their being Chriſtians, but for their eſpouſing ſome diſtinguiſhing Notions and Characters of Man's deviſing.

I am perſwaded, God will utterly overthrow, at leaſt, mightily abaſe Men's affections to, and zeal for all Party-making Notions amongſt Chriſtians, before he will raiſe his Church to that proſperous, flouriſhing State propheſied of, and promiſed in the Scriptures. There muſt be more Love, and Charity, and Unanimity amongſt Chriſtians. Chriſtianity will endure to the End of the World: but as for all the Modes and Faſhions of Man's deviſing, wherewith any do dreſs up the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, theſe may all fall to the Earth, as the Inventers of them have fall'n, or will fall. *Mat.* 16. 18. *Gal.* 6. 15. The True Foundation you ſhould be built upon, is that of the *Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt Himſelf being the Chief Corner-Stone.* Eph. 2. 20. Therefore,

2. Embrace nothing as an Article of Faith, or part of Religion, but what the Holy Scriptures are expreſs, or very clear concerning. You have in theſe Scriptures all that is neceſſary to any Man's Salvation. 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. 17. *Joh.* 20. 13. Believe no Man, nor no Society of Men in theſe Caſes, further than the Scriptnres do warrant what they teach. *Act.* 17. 11. *Iſai.* 8. 20.

3. Be not extreamly hot and zealous about any thing, but what the purity of Faith, and power of Godlineſs are really concerned in. Good Men and Orthodox Chriſtians may have different apprehenſions about Matters of ſmall moment, without much prejudice to their own Souls, or the common Faith, provided theſe Differences be managed without uncharitableneſs and unchriſtian violence: But too much heat and violence about things, diverts from the weighty matters of God's Laws, and Religion ſoon ſenſibly decays. *Phil.* 3. 16. *Gal.* 6. 16. *Tit.* 3. 9.

4. Expect and prepare for Tryals. Chriſt hath dealt plainly and openly with us: *In the World ye ſhall have Troubles.* See *Mat.* 16. 24. Learn to reſign up your ſelves, and live in expectation of Sufferings. Read 1 *Pet.* 4. 12, 13.

5. Be earneſt in Prayer, that your Hearts and Souls may have an inward, real, ſpiritual, affectionate ſenſe of the Truth and Importance of the Doctrines of Chriſtianity. 1 *Cor.* 2. 12, 13, 14.

6. Study

6. Study the Holy Scriptures diligently, and make them your dayly delight. *Pſal.* 1. 2. *Pſal.* 119. 97, 98.

7. Make a good Improvement of the plain, faithful Miniſtry of the Word, whil'ſt you can injoy it: you know not what Times may come. 2 *Tim.* 4. 3, 4.

8. Take heed of Self-confidence, and depend wholly on thy Saviour.

9. Learn to be expert in uſing every part of the Chriſtian Armour. *Eph.* 6. 13. *&c.*

10. Watch your ſelves carefully, and your Enemies too. 2 *Pet.* 3. 17.

11. Take a due care that your Faith may effectually influence you to all Holineſs of Life and Converſation. That Man is in a great preparation to renounce his Faith, that hath proſtituted his Conſcience, and is regardleſs how he lives. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.

Read, conſider, and improve what is offered unto you, and the God of all Grace, who hath called us to his Eternal Glory, by Chriſt Jeſus, after that we have ſuffered a while, make you Perfect, *&c.* 1 *Pet.* 5. 10.

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